



▶ LOVE THAT REQUIRES OUR LIFE

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Victor was five years old when he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. While in the hospital, he shared his faith in Christ with doctors, nurses, technicians, family members and total strangers. His father recommitted his life to Christ, as did countless friends and others known only to God. By our standards, the little boy's life ended much too young. God embraced this young saint and recorded every decision that was made as a result of our loss. The Apostle Paul writes, "We loved you so much that we gave you not only God's Good News but our own lives, too" (1 Thessalonians 2:8, NLT). Some Christians experience the more dramatic example, like Victor's family. For the rest of us, God calls us to give our lives away in simpler ways -- ways that will change eternity for someone else.

75% of all Christians say reading the Bible helps them find meaning in life.

Christians don't reach out to others because they don't believe their faith is worth sharing.

Give Our Lives to Change Eternity

Nearly three-fourths of all Christians say reading the Bible helps them find meaning in life. Almost as many say reading the Bible helps them stand against wrongs in society. Teaching God's Word in discipleship groups must continue to be a vital component of our church life. Whatever you do to accomplish Christian education -- Sunday school, children's church, adult fellowship groups, junior high and other youth groups -- be encouraged! Twenty million children and 7 million teenagers attend Sunday school each week in American evangelical churches. And, at least 100 million Americans are affiliated with at least one church related small group.

To maximize the impact of this opportunity, we must focus on three strategic steps:

- Equip each leader to bridge the loneliness gap with the reality of Jesus Christ;
- Encourage every believer to build strong personal relationships with others; and
- Challenge all Christians to find meaning through a deeper understanding of God's Word.

Victor understood what we must learn

Life in Christ is not about chronology on this planet. It is about vital relationship with God. For this little boy, the temporal ended before his sixth birthday. God gives the rest of us relatively long life in which to grow closer to Him and share what we've experienced with others. Like Victor, let's give our lives away in order to change someone else's eternity.

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Give our lives to solve the loneliness problem

Several years ago, AOL predicted that in spite of increased technology and instant communication, our culture would be impacted by severe loneliness. Leonard Sweet calls it a "relationship famine." Simply stated, the reality is that nearly half of Americans experience occasional feelings of intense loneliness. God's call to His church is to make a place for those who might not normally fit into our congregation. Create a place of healing and wholeness for lonely, hurting people!

Give our lives to solve the doubting problem

The Gallup Organization discovered that 53% of Americans have had an experience that convinced them that God exists, yet nearly half (40%) say "there are a lot of things taught in my religion that I don't believe." More concerning to me is the finding by the Barna Research Group that two-thirds of church going Americans report they never feel the presence of God in church! Many



➤ CURRENT ADULT CULTURE: BIBLICAL LITERACY IN AMERICA

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For the complete text of this article, please visit ce.foursquare.org, and click on Adult Ministries.

Recent data demonstrates that Christian education must be at the core of renewing the church in America. Despite incredible gains in the level of education in this country over the last half-century, most adults know as much about the Bible today as they did when they were in third grade. Consider a few of these findings: only 34% of adults know that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount; less than half (49%) can name the first book of the Bible. In addition, people struggle to name more than two of the Ten Commandments (do not steal and do not murder are the usual two), yet 21% of adults say they read the Bible daily and a full 47% claim to read the Bible at least once a week.

The vast majority of Americans believe religion should influence one's position on social issues. The problem, it seems, is

Roughly a third of Americans (35%) say they are satisfied with the moral and ethical climate of America today. A majority of Americans (64%) say they are dissatisfied with the moral and ethical climate in America.

The Gallup Organization, January 12-15, 2004

that people don't know enough about the Bible and their own church tradition to appropriate the claims of the gospel when it comes to deciding matters regarding the family, sexual mores and other social concerns. As Kenneth Kantzer writes, "No church can be effective to bring clarity and commitment to a world when it is as ignorant of its own basic principles as is our church today. And unless we engage the church in a mighty program of re-education, it will be unable to transmit a Christian heritage to its own children or the society around it."

It's been said that religious interest and commitment in America may be 3,000 miles wide, but only three inches deep. Let's make a concerted effort to help our churches grow deeper in the faith.

➤ "WE BELIEVE IN" FREE, ON-LINE

Foursquare doctrine for adults in sixteen contemporary lessons is now available for free download (pdf) and use in your church. Visit ce.foursquare.org and click on the adult ministries section for this free resource.



➤ FUN ONLINE COMMUNICATION WITH GRANDKIDS

When your grandkids chat with their friends online, they've most likely mastered an entire vocabulary of acronyms and "emoticons". Emotions are those little symbols that feature not only smiles, but frowns, winks, squinty eyes and scrunched mouths.

Roberta Rand, editor of Focus Over Fifty, a Focus on the Family web page suggests rather than hounding your grandkids for letters that will likely never arrive, jump onboard the online chat bandwagon by learning to communicate with your grandkids online.

Most ISPs (Internet Service Providers) offer instant messaging services at no cost. All you have to do is download the software. Then, learn the lingo. Visit ce.foursquare.org (adult ministries section) for the sample emoticons and the full text of Roberta's article on communicating with your grandkids online. GTG (got to go)!

adapted from an article found at www.family.org/focusoverfifty

➤ SMALL GROUPS ARE NOT JUST IN HOMES ANYMORE

Every small group leader or one-on-one mentor knows you can have an informal Bible study while you grab a burger at a fast-food joint or have a discussion over a latte, but have you ever considered the following ideas for small group meetings?

1. Someone in your group might be able to arrange for a conference room at his or her place of business.
2. Too early to wake the kids? Try an early morning prayer meeting in a church member's garage. Mmmm-coffee in an air pot and paper cups!
3. Can't agree on what to eat when you meet? How about holding your Bible study at a food court in a local mall.
4. Want to make a lasting impression? Hold a low-key prayer meeting on the sidewalk outside your neighborhood school once a week. Make sure teachers and administration know that you're praying for them.
5. Make it a book discussion on the comfy couches at your local bookstore.
6. Enjoy the great outdoors. Hold your meeting on the deck or patio of a church member's house.
7. Daycare a problem? Check out the possibility of meeting at a day care center. They get business, and you get uninterrupted time for small-group discussions in another room on-site.

For a full list of 15 creative ideas see the November/December issue of REV magazine.





➤ SCHOOL TUITION NOT A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIFT

Christian schools and churches constantly face the challenge of encouraging parents and families to enroll in spite of rising costs of tuition and school fees. The temptation is to find "creative" ways to minimize the cost of tuition. Questions have been raised about offering tax deductible receipts for tuition payments. There is no acceptable way to offer tax deductions to families in exchange for tuition payments for their own children.

Micahel Sklar, a certified public accountant, filed his and his wife's joint federal income tax return and claimed a charitable deduction. The IRS audited their return and determined that all the deductions qualified except for a \$13,240 paid in two educational institutions where their three children

(all minors) attended school. Based on a letter from the school claiming that the total education was 55 percent religious education, the couple deducted 55 percent of the tuition payments (\$13,240) as a charitable deduction when figuring their adjusted gross income. When audited, the couple made a number of claims as to why they should receive the deduction. However, the U.S. Tax Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rejected their reasoning on all points.

Documentation regarding this case is available by contacting Foursquare Christian Education at 888.635.4234, ext. 4270.



➤ TEACHING MATH FROM A PROVIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

A math curriculum that is governed by a Biblical, Christian philosophy of education forms a Biblical, Christian world and life view in its students. It emphasizes mathematical thinking, logical reasoning, and problem solving based upon the authority of God's Word. This methodology helps students internalize truth, not just recalling facts to "pass the test." It cultivates the student's mastery of mathematical precepts and requires the application of reasoning to problem solving. It verifies God as the Great Mathematician. The internalization of principles enables students to interpret information using symbolic statement, to analyze them, and to understand the precept.

A Biblical, Christian worldview holds that mathematics is the language spoken by God when He created the physical universe, and its immutable laws reveal the attributes of his nature and character. When studied with the revelation of His Word, mathematics is an expression of God's reasoning written in symbols by man. Mathematics, when studied in the light of God's Word, is an essential tool for man in fulfilling God's command to take dominion over all the earth.

Excerpted from an article by Art Ricciardi, director of the Slater Institute, from *The Bridge*, May, June, July 2001, StoneBridge School.



➤ WAS THIS LEGAL?

A teacher worked for a Christian school for four years under one-year contracts each year. The school had a policy that required employees to receive annual written evaluations. The teacher received "excellent" evaluations for her first two years, but no evaluations were performed the last two years. At the beginning of her fourth year, she missed about a month of school because of a miscarriage. She announced later that spring that she was pregnant again. Two months later she was not offered a new contract. No explanation was given.

Was this legal? Probably not. The school board and administration probably believes that the school is protected when it didn't offer a new contract because all the schools' obligations were met under the old contract. However, if the decision to not rehire the teacher was based on a

discriminatory reason, the school could be in big legal trouble if the

teacher files a complaint with the EEOC or files a civil suit citing discrimination law. For instance, when Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, it made it clear that it is illegal for employers to discriminate against women because of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Since the school didn't follow its own evaluation policy, it would have difficulty establishing a nondiscriminatory reason for the nonrenewal, such as unsatisfactory performance by the teacher. A jury would likely side with the teacher if this became a court case.

This story is based on an actual call to the Association of Christian Schools International legal office. ACSI and Foursquare Christian Education recommends that schools use caution even when using one-year employment contracts with faculty. Be sure not to discriminate in personnel decisions based on pregnancy issues. Follow your school policies consistently.

Source: ACSI Legal/Legislative Update, Fall 2003





➤ REACHING CHILDREN BY TOUCHING THEIR LEADERS

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Our newly established National Children's Ministry Leadership Development Team recently met in Denver, Colorado to strategize, plan, and initiate **CM Leadership Connections**. In response to the requests and needs of our growing districts, and in accordance with our vision to support and equip children's ministry leaders, several of our districts throughout the country will host **Connections** (CM Leadership Retreats) this year. Partnering with Foursquare Christian Education, each of the retreats will be **district-led** and **district-distinctive**.

The mission statement for our National CM Leadership Team is Isaiah 58:11,12. Our vision is that every children's minister will lay hold of Isaiah's prophecy, "those from among you will raise up the foundations of many generations." The Lord has promised us guidance and an endless provision of strength to reach children for the Kingdom! Our passion and purpose is to provide opportunities for children's ministry leaders to develop relationships and networking resources. We want to see leaders fully empowered to develop and fulfill personal ministry calling.

➤ CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADERSHIP CONNECTION

Cynthia Brandt, Children's Pastor at Greeley Foursquare and District CE leader for the Rocky Mountain District in Colorado, writes, "Children's ministry is vital to the life and health of our churches. To ensure strong ministry to children, we must have healthy children's ministry leaders. We must connect our leaders with others who will encourage, understand, hold accountable, and share like vision through meaningful, healthy relationships. I need those kinds of relationships. **CM Leadership Connections** is the foundation for building these types of relationships in my district. Whenever I am able to spend time with other CM leaders, I am encouraged, challenged, and validated."



➤ CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: PASSION AND PURPOSE

For children, the early years hold the promise of spiritually defining moments. Bama Research Group reported from a nationwide survey that children aged 5 through 13 have a 32% probability of accepting Christ as their Savior. Every other age group through to adult had, at best a 4%-6% probability of making that choice.

These are the vital years. Growth, physical, emotional, and moral development are all important, but spiritual development is foundational. Children need our help if they are to grow up as fully devoted followers of Jesus. Children's ministry has to encourage kids to live by the Spirit and search out God's answers to modern challenges in the Bible, and we have to make any 'hands on' approach to the Bible easy to use, and fun.

Sue Penson, Children's Pastor (with her husband Richard) at Weymouth, MA Foursquare and District CE leaders for the Southern New England District remembers, "Years before we were drawn into children's ministry, God gave me a vision of Him taking off the church roof and moving us out into the community. This has started to be a reality with the midweek **Kidz' Klub** growing from **Good News Bears** and, literally, moving from the church gym out to a local condominium complex. We have 70-90 kids, and more than half are unchurched. God has a passion to see children come to know Jesus, and we are catching that vision. Where we are going is more important than where we've come from. Who we are building is more important than what we are building."



➤ CM CONNECTIONS: A SNEAK PEAK AT WHAT'S AHEAD

The **Mile High** and **Rocky Mountain** Districts will host the first **CM Connections** in Colorado Springs, April 30 – May 1 with the theme, **Connecting Vision with Passion**. **Southern New England District** Supervisor, **Pastor John Hatcher** and CM Training Specialist, **Lynn Sawyer** will address the keynote theme, **Exciting Times of Eternal Value**, at **Connections** in Massachusetts on May 14 & 15. Details will be forthcoming for **Connections** in Hilo, Hawaii on June 25 & 26, hosted by the **Pacific Rim** and **Mid-Pacific** Districts.

The following **Connections** have unconfirmed dates and are in the planning stages: **North Carolina & South Carolina** Districts, September 23 – 25; **Willamette & Cascade** Districts, October 11 – 13; **Columbia & Mount Hood** Districts, November 7-9, and the **Ohio** Districts, the first or second week of November.

Please refer to ce.foursquare.org for updates on these **Connections**, and for details on events in your area. For further information on **Connections**, contact Lynn Sawyer at lsawyer@foursquare.org or toll-free at 888.635.4234, ext. 4270.



AN AMAZING STORY OF KIDS REACHING KIDS IN NEW JERSEY

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Kids in Hackettstown, New Jersey are changing their world. These kids live out what most of us just talk about. They take their call from Jesus to "Go into all the world" seriously. I especially love the story about the "God's Most Wanted" list of bullies. I think that list deeply touches the heart of the Father. Read on as Evy Gallik, Children's Pastor at The Gathering Place gives the details...



Here's an exceptional idea from Evy and the kids in Hackettstown:

We made a "God's Most Wanted List" with the really tough kids from all the schools who regularly torment the other kids. We learned about "blessing those who persecute you," and our kids began praying for these bullies. Of the 12 kids they've been praying for on our list, 4 have come to Jesus!

We are a fairly small church with about 30 children in grades 1-6. Last summer we challenged kids to lead 50 of their friends to Christ. Our kids wrote down the names of their unsaved friends on little cards with pictures of fish on them. We put all the "fish" into a fishbowl. Each time we get together, we have an Operation Kid Net time where the kids share testimonies, discuss evangelism strategies and pray for their friends. As kids give testimonies about leading their friends to Christ, we take the friend's name out of the fishbowl and place it into fishing net. We pray for the newly saved kid and have a time of thanking the Lord for what He's done.

WE HAVE 45 FISH IN THE NET!

It's really been astounding. One girl prepared a PowerPoint presentation with the main points of the gospel to show to her friends at her public school during recess. At another public school, kids who misbehave are not allowed to go out on the playground during recess. One of our boys, although allowed to go out during recess, stays behind with his Bible and ministers to the "bad" kids. All of our kids are purposely seeking out the kids that nobody likes and are becoming friends with them. One of our girls led a girl from a special ed class to Jesus. She told her about how God made her perfect and about how much He loves her just the way she is.

Thanks so much for Operation Kid Net; it's been an amazing blessing to our church and our kids!

Evy Gallik, Children's Pastor
The Gathering Place, Hackettstown, New Jersey

Operation Kid Net is a resource that helps churches across the country mobilize kids on a mission to reach their friends. Our new Operation Kid Net DVD project is currently in the editing room with a release date of Spring 2004. This DVD will help us share faith-building stories from churches like this one in New Jersey as well as help us train leaders and kids to be great fishers of men.

You can order a "free" Operation Kid Net Starter Kit for your church by going online to ce.foursquare.org. Look for these resources under children's ministry.





► WHY CHILDREN'S CAMPS?

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Someone recently asked me why we should have Christian camps for children. The question floored me at first because my life has been so impacted by camps I couldn't imagine anyone questioning the validity of the camping experience. It is a valid question worth a thoughtful response. Allow me to share why I think we should have children's Christian camps.

- Christian camping most often targets the 81% of Christians who give their life to the Lord before the age of 18.
- Christian camping appeals to the saved and non-saved so it is a ministry that

both evangelizes and disciples.

- At camp kids have the opportunity to meet Jesus in an environment that is free from the distractions of everyday life.
- Kids spend more concentrated time growing in Christ at camp than throughout the remainder of the year in church.
- Christian camping combats the secular worldview and shows kids that Christians know how to have good clean fun!
- At camp, kids enjoy fellowship with believers from other churches which expands their view of the Body of Christ.
- Christian camping initiates healthy relationships with adults and other kids that result in discipleship and mentoring.

As a Children's Ministry Director or other pastoral member, you must decide

whether or not to participate in your district's children's camp. Camps are beginning to gear up and registration forms will be going out soon. Camp requires a commitment of time, personnel and finances that may challenge those who you work with in ministry. May I encourage you that the inconveniences will seem minimal when compared to the rewards your kids will experience. I'm looking forward to hearing what God accomplishes in our kids during this camping season.



For resource information about Foursquare Children's Camps, please visit ce.foursquare.org, and click on children's ministry

Serving the Foursquare church through support, consultation, networking, and training

Making Disciples



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